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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information

FOOD FOR PEACE

Reserve

IN BRIEF

We are facing a world food crisis that is literally a matter of life or death to millions of people in war-torn Europe and Asia. President Truman has called for quick action by government, by organizations, and by individual Americans. The President's Famine Emergency Committee has gone into action and has agreed on certain definite things which every American can do.

Specifically, we can all take TWO immediate steps:

1. Cut waste and eat less wheat products, fats and oils -- substituting foods that are plentiful.
2. Produce and preserve (farm production, Victory gardens, and home food preservation).

The Need for Food Abroad

More persons in Europe and Asia are hungry today than at any time during the war. Millions will die of starvation before the next harvest -- unless we in the United States send them more food. We are the only nation in the world that can save the situation.

During the war when our radio broadcasts were urging conquered peoples to join the underground -- we promised them food. After the war we set definite goals to ship certain quantities of foodstuffs each month. It will require almost super-human efforts to reach these goals.

But even if we reach these goals untold millions will be hungry. The aim, of course, is to exceed these goals -- for there can be no peace in a hungry world.

While we in the U. S. have been consuming food at a daily rate of about 3,400 calories per person, the urban population in half of Europe is existing on less than 2,000 calories per capita a day and in some areas they receive less than 1,500 calories per capita a day.

The bread ration in France is only about one-half a loaf a day -- and most of their diet is bread. In Italy the bread ration (including the Italian staple spaghetti) is considerably less.

In China, tens of millions are on the verge of starvation -- and millions of them will die unless help is forthcoming immediately.

But even "average" figures do not tell the entire story. "Per capita" figures assume that each person receives his equitable share. Human beings, fighting for food to maintain life, do not consider equity or statistics. It is the weaker and the poorer who suffer the most -- who are getting far less than the "average per capita" consumption.

MAR 14 1946

Reasons for World Food Crisis at this Time

That the food situation in war-torn areas would be critical had been anticipated for many months, but conditions are proving to be even more serious than at first thought. The Department of Agriculture's World Food Situation Report of October 1, 1945, estimated world food production per capita last year at 10 percent less than before the war. Later information, as reported in the World Food Situation Report of February 10, showed that world food production per person was down 12 percent below pre-war, with war-ravaged Europe about 20 percent below normal. Wheat was especially hard hit, as well as rice. The chief cause of the change in expectations from last fall to early February was drought.

Drought can not be predicted. All during the growing season the farmers "hope" for rain. If it comes they harvest good crops -- if not the grain withers and dies.

In many areas the grain crop was only 50 percent of what had been anticipated. North Africa -- which has exported grain to Europe ever since the days of Rome -- has had the worst crop failure in 85 years.

Since the last harvest, wheat supplies -- in the U. S. as well as in Europe -- have disappeared more rapidly than was anticipated. U. S. wheat stocks on January 1 turned out to be 1.7 million tons lower than had been expected earlier. One of the main reasons was heavier feeding of wheat to livestock.

It is now necessary to take unusual measures to supply the amount of wheat which was scheduled in early December for relief use -- namely, six million tons in the first half of 1946. If the U. S. makes good on this amount and other exporting countries supply another six million tons, there will still be a shortage of ten million tons of wheat for emergency feeding due to the increased needs of India, South Africa and other countries.

In human terms, a million tons of wheat means a half year's supply of bread for 20 million people in devastated countries.

Governmental Action

On February 6, 1946, President Truman issued a directive to various Government agencies inaugurating a nine-point program as follows:

1. The appropriate agencies of this Government will immediately inaugurate a vigorous campaign to secure the full cooperation of all consumers in conserving food, particularly bread. Additional emphasis will be placed upon the cooperation of bakers and retailers in reducing waste of bread in distribution channels.
2. The use of wheat in the direct production of alcohol and beer will be discontinued; the use of other grains for the production of beverage alcohol will be limited, beginning March 1, to five days' consumption a month; and the use of other grains for the production of beer will be limited to an aggregate quantity equal to that used for this purpose in 1940 which was 30 percent less than the quantity used in 1945. This will save for food about 20 million bushels of grain by June 30, 1946.

3. The wheat flour extraction rate (the quantity of flour produced from each bushel of wheat) will be raised to 80 percent for the duration of the emergency. Also, steps will be taken to limit the distribution of flour to amounts essential for current civilian distribution. This will save about 25 million bushels of wheat during the first half of 1946.
4. The Department of Agriculture will control millers' inventories of wheat and bakers' and distributors' inventories of flour. The inventory controls will be designed to maintain the wheat and flour being held for civilian use at the minimum necessary for distribution purposes.
5. Specific preference will be given to the rail movement of wheat, corn, meat, other essential foods in order promptly to export maximum quantities to the destinations where most needed.
6. The Department of Agriculture will exercise direct control over exports of wheat and flour to facilitate movement to destination of greatest need.
7. Necessary steps will be taken to export during this calendar year, 375,000 tons of fats and oils, 1.6 billion pounds of meat, of which one billion pounds is to be made available during the first half of 1946, and to increase the exports of dairy products, particularly cheese and evaporated milk.
8. The War and Navy Departments already have aided materially the movement of Philippine copra (the raw material from which coconut oil is produced) by releasing 200 LCM and J boats for the interisland trade in the Philippines. These Departments and the War Shipping Administration will take immediate steps to make available the additional ships needed for this purpose.
- The Secretaries of War and Navy will release for the movement of food to Europe a refrigerated ships not essential to the maintenance of the flow of food to the armed forces.
9. The Department of Agriculture will develop additional ways in which grain now being used in the feeding of livestock and poultry could be conserved for use as human food. These steps may include means to obtain the rapid marketing of heavy hogs, preferably all those over 225 pounds, and of beef cattle with a moderate rather than a high degree of finish; to encourage the culling of poultry flocks; to prevent excessive chick production; and to encourage more economical feeding of dairy cattle. Regulations to limit wheat inventories of feed manufacturers and to restrict the use of wheat in food will be prepared.

